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CIA
WASHINGTON

The CIA has not decided whether to appeal a federal judge's ruling that the intelligence agency must rehire a self-described homosexual fired as a possible security risk, a spokeswoman said Friday.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said "no decision has yet been taken whether there will be an appeal."

U.S. District Court Judge Barrington Parker ruled Thursday that CIA Director William Casey's firing of a male homosexual employee was "improper, unreasonable, an abuse of discretion and both procedurally and substantively flawed."

He ordered the CIA to rehire the employee, identified in court proceedings only as "John Doe," and who had been working for the agency for nine years before his dismissal.

"Doe" was represented by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Parker said "Doe" joined the CIA in 1973 at age 17 as a typist and advanced steadily into electronics. He was said to have become aware of his homosexuality in 1976 but waited until January 1982 to voluntarily acknowledge it to a CIA security officer. Doe was placed on administrative leave the next month and fired on national security grounds in May 1982.

Pherson said the CIA does not have a blanket ban on hiring homosexuals but considers it on a case-by-case basis. She said that homosexuals have traditionally been "obvious targets" of hostile intelligence agencies, and that they could not be posted to many foreign countries where homosexual activities are illegal.

A Pentagon spokesman said a directive issued in the early 1980s ruled that homosexuality "is incompatible with military service" and that both male and female homosexuals are subject to dismissal when their status is confirmed.